



BELARUS

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**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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**STATEMENT
BY HIS EXCELLENCY
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It is generally considered that the struggle of ideologies has passed into history together with the collapse of the bipolar world order. Yet in reality the world continues a painful quest for the system of ideas that could ensure its security, justice and prosperity. The 2005 World Summit and the current General Assembly debate are a good evidence of this quest.

Nowhere but on this rostrum one gets such an acute sense that ideas and their struggle are not an abstract matter. They permeate the flesh and blood of millions and billions of people. I hope many of you would agree that free self-determination is the main ideology of the modern world. Isn't it absolutely clear that as long as there is no independent Palestinian state which peacefully co-exists with all its neighbours, as long as Iraq is not free from occupation, terrorism and extremism will remain inevitable and invincible. Attempts to solve the problems of self-determination by violent – military or other – measures from the outside result only in the increasing ranks of their ruthless disciples.

In the modern world free self-determination is not only an issue of state independence and sovereignty. This is also an issue of recognising – not in word, but in deed – a diversity of ways to progress of countries and peoples. We must provide Palestinians, Iraqis, Lebanese and other peoples with a possibility to build their own homes in the way they want. Any help should come only then and in such a manner as they wish it and not as deemed appropriate by the ideologists of crusades in some capitals. There are no clever and foolish, superior and inferior, righteous and vicious peoples and religions. There are just people of the planet who are equally eager for happiness, simple and worthy.

Five years which have passed since 11 September 2001 proved with a painful clarity that ideology and practice of crusades do not bring peace and democracy. They lead to the devastation of states, the destruction of a fabric of life of entire nations, death of children, women, innocent civilians. They also result in an upsurge of terrorism, growing ranks of its followers and supporters.

It is in the same way that religious intolerance, rejection of beliefs and conventions of other people do not bring spiritual harmony and unity. They cause an outbreak of radicalism, fanaticism and extremism.

Encouragement of religious tolerance within societies should become a responsibility of political and state leaders.

International security and global stability are inseparable from the solution of the world development problems. Security and development are inseparable. This is not some artificial linkage created in the halls of the United Nations. Its real nature has been clearly shown by the events in the suburbs of Paris.

Are we – here, in the General Assembly, and our colleagues in the capitals of the richest countries – waiting for an even more alarming signal? Are we waiting for the

spiraling extremism caused by the lack of prospects for the future? The situation is as clear as it can get. And it is clear that inadequate reflection of the priorities of development and development assistance in the 2005 World Summit outcome document was a serious mistake of the international community.

How can we correct this mistake? Only by earnest – and not hypocritical – practical efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals. Before too long we will see new proposals based on the results of the large-scale study on raising system-wide coherence and coordination of actions of the agencies of the UN system in the field of development assistance. Our task is to implement these important initiatives in deed.

The Millennium Development Goals are clear. None is easily achievable. These problems are too old and too deep-rooted for them to be solved by incremental and shallow methods. Nobody treats a dangerous infection with aspirin. A serious task requires serious tools.

This is why the time has come for the deep transformation of the Bretton Woods institutions. They were established in a different era. They were established for different purposes. They should be changed and made to serve the cause of global development.

A special role in making the development a success – not a problem – will belong to the Economic and Social Council as the major United Nations coordinating body on development. Special responsibility will rest on the shoulders of the members of the Council.

Belarus is a candidate to ECOSOC for 2007-2009. I appeal to you, distinguished delegates of the United Nations Member States, with a request to support Belarus in the elections to be held during the current session.

You may rest assured that the Republic of Belarus will not fall short of your expectations. As a member of the United Nations since 1945, Belarus has never wavered in her devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement since 1998, Belarus actively and resolutely stands for the implementation of the goals and principles of the Movement, practical strengthening of its role in international affairs.

Our responsibility and concern for the destiny of the world are sincere. There is a lot of evidence to prove it.

In her region the Republic of Belarus is a donor of international security.

Belarus was the first country in the world to renounce voluntarily the possession of nuclear weapons she had it her at disposal.

Despite all difficulties of the transition period, our country was among the first to respond to the plight of people struck by tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 and

provided humanitarian assistance to the disaster-stricken countries of the South-East Asia.

Neither was our country an indifferent contemplator of the recent conflict in the Middle East. At the height of the hostilities Belarus invited the children from the states ravaged by war to come to Belarus for health rehabilitation.

Adherence of Belarus to the cause of development is also sincere and firm. Implementation of the international development agenda will be the indisputable priority of our work in the ECOSOC.

And what is the most important: we know how to do it.

Having been left 15 years ago, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, without natural resources and foreign markets, without her national currency and international assistance, we have achieved our economic and social objectives. They may be considered modest if compared to the most developed countries but they are of critical importance as a stage in our movement forward, as an evidence of what a medium-size state can achieve in the most difficult of circumstances. Among other hardships we had to deal on our own with the Chernobyl disaster. That disaster affected more than 20 per cent of our population with radioactive contamination, made it impossible to use more than 20 per cent of arable land and 30 per cent of forests. Chernobyl's direct damage alone in Belarus measures up to 35 annual national budgets. It is more than appropriate to recall it today, in the year of 20th anniversary of this largest man-made disaster in the history of mankind.

Having overcome a 50 per cent decline in economy and having rejected formulae that the International Monetary Fund tried to impose upon us, Belarus was the first among the CIS countries to restore and raise the level of GDP to 120 per cent of its peak Soviet value. We created a market economy with a strong social emphasis. We have preserved free education, including higher education, and health care, the high quality and availability of social services for all people without any exception. We have reduced unemployment to 1.5 per cent and are successfully curbing inflation.

I am confident that experience, approaches and knowledge of Belarus will be a useful contribution to the work of ECOSOC on Millennium Development Goals. If the majority of you give us the credit of trust, we will most actively and persistently work for a stronger ECOSOC role in addressing the development challenges.

Together with those who share these approaches we will work to reform the social and economic sphere of the United Nations. Reform measures are not working yet. Without these measures the activity of different UN funds and programmes at a country level can never be effective. To continue a 'business as usual' approach in these matters would mean to leave the Millennium Development Goals on paper.

There is also a large 'debit balance' in the UN activities outside ECOSOC. There has been no substantial movement towards the enhancement of the role of the General Assembly as a principle organ of the United Nations.

So far there has been no progress in reorganisation of the Security Council, a key element in the UN reform. Sluggishness of the Security Council in addressing situation in Lebanon causes not only sorrow and frustration but once again convinces us of the disparity between the Security Council and the image of the world as we know it today.

However, we are pleased to note a movement in the right direction from the fork-in-the-road where, in the words of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UN has found itself several years ago.

The last year's summit has undoubtedly become a 'spur' for the international community. It made us cast a new look on the world and made us take a decisive action.

Our organisation has already achieved some results which were hardly conceivable even a couple of years ago.

Peacebuilding Commission was established. At the foundation of this important step lies a realisation by all of us of an urgent need for a stronger UN role in post conflict recovery.

Human Rights Council was created. This happened because among other things we came to a paradoxical conclusion: the discussion of human rights issues in the UN, or rather what this process has become over the years, ceased to protect and promote human rights. Instead of it Commission on Human Rights was transformed into a handy instrument to serve the selfish interests of a small group of countries and to pressure other nations. We need to continue the Council's first timid steps towards restoration of the letter and the spirit of the UN Charter.

These two examples of our 'positive balance' are indicative. They prove that Member States can reach agreement on the most difficult issues. We need just two conditions – a true responsibility for the fate of the world and a political will to engage in action and not in shallow talk.

Having made after the 2005 World Summit right and important steps in the human rights area, the international community should take new actions at this session.

Such actions should be aimed at a true promotion of human rights and protection of the real victims of human rights violations, and not at getting even with disagreeable nations by abusing an unjust instrument of country-specific resolutions.

As a major step towards the practical promotion of human rights and protection of victims of one of the most acute and painful phenomenon of the modern world, together with other partners Belarus has elaborated a draft resolution on improving

international coordination in fighting human trafficking and is presenting it to the General Assembly at this session. A global scale of that challenge requires from all of us not shallow talk but truly coordinated and purposeful actions. We see the goal of these efforts in elaborating a UN strategy on fighting human trafficking.

Please support the establishment on a system-based approach of a Global Partnership Against Slavery and Trafficking in Human Beings. Who else but the UN should care about dozens, hundreds and perhaps millions of victims of modern slavery, above all women and children? Who else but the UN should encourage better international coordination in eradicating this phenomenon which is an utter disgrace for our century?

At the World Summit many leaders spoke about the ‘spirit of San-Francisco’. The spirit of San-Francisco in 1944-1945 came from the sense of responsibility of nations in dealing with the problems of the world. Not by the responsibility for their own narrow interests – this is obvious and simple – but for a common cause. This spirit became possible as a result of a huge disaster – the Second World War, about 60 million deaths and inconceivable suffering of hundreds of millions. Do we also need a huge disaster to restore that spirit? I am sure, we do not. I hope we all have learned the lessons of history.

After an era of romantic ideals and their tragic failure in the 1990s mankind today is coming to a more elaborate perception of what kind of world order it needs.

The Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana has demonstrated a clear aspiration of the majority of the nations of the world to move from the self-exhausted unipolar world to the multipolar world, fair and stable, based on the interdependency of diverse global and regional centres of power. To the world fit for all.

The Havana Summit has shown: humanity should be humane. This should be the United Nations motto for the challenging 21st century.